

COFNOD O BENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO GAN SWYDDOG
RECORD OF DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

Penderfyniad Allweddol | Key Decision ✓

Mae'r Penderfyniad Wedi'i Ddirprwyo hwn wedi'i bennu yn 'Benderfyniad Allweddol' gan ei fod yn debygol o:

This Delegated Decision has been established as a 'Key Decision' as it is likely:

a) arwain at y Cyngor yn ysgwyddo gwariant sylweddol neu wneud arbedion sylweddol;
to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant;

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neu / or:

b) fod yn arwyddocaol o ran sut mae'n effeithio ar gymunedau sy'n byw neu'n gweithio mewn ardal sy'n cynnwys dwy etholaeth neu adran etholiadol neu ragor.
to be significant in terms of its effects on Communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards.

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c) Eraill / Other:

PWNC | SUBJECT: Publication of the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report

DIBEN YR ADRODDIAD | PURPOSE OF THE REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to approve the publication of the "2026 Air Quality Progress Report" for public consultation and to confirm the Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure, will consider the outcome of the public consultation, and should it be deemed appropriate, accept the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations.

PENDERFYNIAD WEDI'I DDIRPRWYO | DELEGATED DECISION:

The Director of Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure considers the outcome of the public consultation and if appropriate:

- a) accepts the '2026 Air Quality Progress Report';
- b) continue, as resources allow, to undertake the Local Authority's annual reporting duties in relation to the assessment of local air quality and its management.



Llofnod y Prif Swyddog
Chief Officer Signature

Louise Davies

Enw (priflythrennau)
Name (Print Name)

7th October 2026

Dyddiad
Date

Mae'r penderfyniad yn cael ei wneud yn unol ag Adran 15 o Ddeddf Llywodraeth Leol 2000 (Swyddogaethau'r Corff Gweithredol) ac yn y cylch gorchwyl sy wedi'i nodi yn Adran 5 o Ran 3 o Gyfansoddiad y Cyngor.

The decision is taken in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government Act, 2000 (Executive Functions) and in the terms set out in Section 5 of Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

YMGYNGHORI | CONSULTATION



Councillor Bob Harris
Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Leisure

6th October 2026

LLOFNOD YR AELOD YMGYNGHOROL O'R CABINET

CONSULTEE CABINET MEMBER SIGNATURE

DYDDIAD | DATE

LLOFNOD SWYDDOG YMGYNGHOROL

CONSULTEE OFFICER SIGNATURE

DYDDIAD | DATE

WILL THIS DECISION HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE WARD?

A FYDD Y PENDERFYNIAD YMA'N CAEL EFFAITH AR Y WARD?

~~BYDD | YES~~

NA FYDD | NO

Any further comments/Need for Local Member to be informed?:

Unrhyw sylwadau pellach/Oes angen rhoi gwybod i'r Aelod Lleol?:

This decision recognises the improved air quality within the local authority as a whole and enables the Local Authority to maintain its focus on six areas that may experience ongoing challenges to achieving sustainable compliance to relevant Air Quality Objectives. The Local Authority will, at present, maintain its current assessment capabilities whilst also continuing to aspire to improve air quality throughout all its area.

RHEOLAU'R WEITHDREFN GALW-I-MEWN | CALL IN PROCEDURE RULES.

A YW'R PENDERFYNIAD YN UN BRYN A HEB FOD YN DESTUN PROSES GALW-I-MEWN GAN Y PWYLLGOR TROSOLWG A CHRAFFU?:

IS THE DECISION DEEMED URGENT AND NOT SUBJECT TO CALL-IN BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:

~~YDY | YES~~

NAC YDY | NO

Rheswm dros fod yn fater brys | Reason for Urgency:

.....

Os yw'n cael ei ystyried yn fater brys - llofnod y Llywydd, y Dirprwy Llywydd neu Bennaeth y Gwasanaeth Cyflogedig yn cadarnhau cytundeb fod y penderfyniad arfaethedig yn rhesymol yn yr holl amgylchiadau iddo gael ei drin fel mater brys, yn unol â rheol gweithdrefn trosolwg a chraffu 17.2:

If deemed urgent - signature of Presiding Officer or Deputy Presiding Officer or Head of Paid Service confirming agreement that the proposed decision is reasonable in all the circumstances for it being treated as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the overview and scrutiny procedure rule 17.2:

.....
(Llywydd | Presiding Officer)

.....
(Dyddiad | Date)

DS - Os yw hwn yn benderfyniad sy'n cael ei ail-ystyried yna does dim modd galw'r penderfyniad i mewn a bydd y penderfyniad yn dod i rym o'r dyddiad mae'r penderfyniad wedi'i lofnodi.

NB - If this is a reconsidered decision then the decision cannot be Called In and the decision will take effect from the date the decision is signed.

AT DDEFNYDD Y SWYDDFA YN UNIG | FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

DYDDIADAU CYHOEDDI A GWEITHREDU | PUBLICATION & IMPLEMENTATION DATES

CYHOEDDI | PUBLICATION

Cyhoeddi ar Wefan y Cyngor | Publication on the Council's Website:- ____08.10.26____

DYDDIAD | DATE

GWEITHREDU'R PENDERFYNIAD | IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

Nodwch: Fydd y penderfyniad hwn ddim yn dod i rym nac yn cael ei weithredu'n llawn nes cyn pen 3 diwrnod gwaith ar ôl ei gyhoeddi. Nod hyn yw ei alluogi i gael ei "Alw i Mewn" yn unol â Rheol 17.1, Rheolau Gweithdrefn Trosolwg a Chraffu.

Note: This decision will not come into force and may not be implemented until the expiry of 3 clear working days after its publication to enable it to be the subject to the Call-In Procedure in Rule 17.1 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

Yn amodol ar y drefn "Galw i Mewn", caiff y penderfyniad ei roi ar waith ar / Subject to Call In the implementation date will be

____14.10.26____

DYDDIAD / DATE

WEDI'I GYMERADWYO I'W GYHOEDDI: ✓ | APPROVED FOR PUBLICATION :✓



Rhagor o wybodaeth | Further Information:

Cyfadran Directorate:	Community Services
Enw'r Person Cyswllt Contact Name:	Neil Pilliner
Swydd Designation:	Public Health & Protection Service Manager
Rhif Ffôn Telephone Number:	01443 425001



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

PUBLICATION OF THE 2026 AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

14th SEPTEMBER 2026

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Author(s): Neil Pilliner, Public Health & Protection Service Manager

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to publish the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report for public consultation and, dependent upon the outcome of the public consultation, to accept the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Local Authority's scheme of delegation, this report has been prepared to accompany the intended Officer decision of the Director of Community Services, as described below.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To publish the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report.
- 2.2 Dependent upon the outcome of public consultation, to adopt the findings and recommendations of the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report.
- 2.3 Continue, as resources allow, to undertake the Local Authority's statutory reporting duties in relation to the assessment of local air quality and its management.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Local Authority conducts regular monitoring and review of ambient outdoor air quality within its area to determine compliance to Air Quality Objectives [AQOs], set by Welsh Government to protect public health. The 2026 Air Quality Progress Report provides the latest examination of this work, as well as an assessment of possible future influences upon local air quality management, it takes account of the continued progress the Local Authority and its partners are making to advance the improvement of local air quality.
- 3.2 The vast majority of Rhondda Cynon Taf is understood to experience compliant air quality and is likely to continue to do so. It is expected that air quality may continue to improve into the near future and, with the incremental adoption of new transport technologies, there is the potential for further sustained significant improvement to at least some air pollutants in the longer-term.

- 3.3 Currently, Rhondda Cynon Taf has six Air Quality Management Areas [AQMAs], all of which are in respect of breaches of AQOs for Nitrogen dioxide. These AQMAs are of limited size and are associated with specific parts of busy urban local roads or the regional trunk road network.
- 3.4 In addition to reviewing understanding of local air quality, the Local Authority can also take actions that hopefully work towards improving air quality within an AQMA. To facilitate the implementation of cost-effective actions, the Local Authority has already adopted Air Quality Action Plans [AQAPs] for each of its current AQMAs.
- 3.5 To ensure effective prioritisation of resources, continued accountability, developing co-ordination with stakeholders, public participation and to satisfy its statutory obligations, it is necessary for the Local Authority to publish the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report for consultation.

4 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The air pollutant nitrogen dioxide is a ubiquitous yet harmful gas that may reduce the quality and length of life of chronically exposed individuals. It is often most observed in urban areas or near strategic transport infrastructure, with combustion-engine motor vehicles currently representing the most significant local emission source. Evidence suggests that the lowest social economic groups are most likely to experience poor air quality and are likely to be the most adversely affected by it. In recognition of its importance to public health, the “level of Nitrogen dioxide in ambient air” has been set, by Welsh Government, as National Indicator No. 4.
- 4.2 Although the vast majority of the County Borough experiences relatively lower levels of nitrogen dioxide, the reasons why it can become elevated in certain distinct locations can be very specific to the area concerned. Often the local topography & urban environment, volume, speed and composition of road traffic, as well as traffic management and the likelihood of chronic congestion can be important influences. Strategic arterial roads, for instance the A470, may have a demonstrable effect on both local and regional levels of air pollution.
- 4.3 For more than a decade, a consistent improving trend in nitrogen dioxide throughout most parts of the County Borough reinforces the understanding that the vast majority of Rhondda Cynon Taf is expected to continue to show levels of nitrogen dioxide that are compliant to the current AQOs for nitrogen dioxide. In 2025, levels of nitrogen dioxide continued to improve and were at their lowest levels since the early 2000s. The levels of nitrogen dioxide are expected to continue to improve into the near future and the incremental adoption of new transport technologies will significantly spur greater improvement in the medium to longer-term.
- 4.4 There are localised areas within Rhondda Cynon Taf which have observed elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide, that were on occasion above or at risk of being above the annual mean AQO for nitrogen dioxide, and as such have been included within six current AQMAs. The Cymmer, Ferndale, Mt Ash Town Centre, Nightingales Bush, Pontypridd Town Centre and Tylorstown AQMAs, although having experienced

significant improvement in recent years, are likely to potentially remain at risk of being non-compliant to the annual AQO for nitrogen dioxide into the very near-term. Future developments and interventions are expected to continue to manifest and it is predicted that many of these current AQMAs may become sustainably compliant in the near to medium term.

- 4.5 In addition to nitrogen dioxide, Particulate Matter has also been assessed. Particulate Matter can consist of a huge variety of chemical compounds and materials and, due to their often-small size, they can may have the potential to impact human health. PM₁₀ is a particulate size of Particulate Matter that has relevant AQOs. In general, levels of PM₁₀ within the Country Borough are expected to be well within compliance to these AQOs. However, monitoring of PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5} is being undertaken by the Local Authority at Garth Avenue, Glyncoch. Analysis of the results underlies the likely significant influences of various operations at Craig Yr Hesg Quarry upon local air quality. Although, at present the location remains compliant to the current AQOs for PM₁₀, the continuation of monitoring is necessary to ensure any future changes, which could have the potential to impact on the local prevalence of PM₁₀, can be considered.
- 4.6 There is an aspiration that all communities within Rhondda Cynon Taf will experience low levels of air pollution that, at the least, are compliant with the relevant AQOs. In working with its partners, the Local Authority has drawn upon expertise and analysis to help identify mid Rhondda (Cymmer, Ferndale and Tylorstown) and at Mountain Ash as likely to benefit the most from a targeted approach to improve local air quality
- 4.7 The Local Authority continues, where possible, to implement or influence the implementation of actions within its AQAPs as well as other actions that may more generally improve local air quality. Improvement actions undertaken recently include progression of the South Wales Metro, completion of the A4119 Coed Ely Dualling Scheme, installation of additional dedicated electrical vehicle charging points at public car parks, subsidised (£1.50 max fare) bus travel within Rhondda Cynon Taf during certain parts of the year, defined free post-16 to 19 education travel, progressing a multimillion pound phased works programme to upgrade and improve a number of active travel routes.
- 4.8 Many issues underlining poor air quality are also significant in the broader Active Travel, Climate Change, Environmental Noise and Biodiversity Agendas. Effective solutions to improve air quality can supplement efforts in tackling climate change and environmental noise. Close integration with the Active Travel Agenda, Climate Change Agenda and Noise Action Plan Priority Areas will continue to be aspired to in future local air quality management.
- 4.9 The implementation of the Environment (Air Quality and Soundscapes) (Wales) Act 2025 could require reconsideration as to how the Local Authority undertakes and resources its local air quality duties. For instance, should current Air Quality Objectives, relevant to local air quality management, be strengthened and consequently require renewed appraisal.

- 4.10 Although in the past wildfires, and their impact on local air quality and wellbeing, have posed a significant concern to many local communities. Recently, as the wildfire season has become increasingly extended and has intensified, community concerns have become even more prescient. The Council will continue to work with its partners in tackling the cause of wildfires as well as potentially monitoring their air quality impacts, whilst also acknowledging the conditions that increase wildfire risk may become more prevalent as a consequence of continuing climate change
- 4.11 Whilst acknowledging significant future resource uncertainty and should circumstances allow, the Local Authority will continue to support the continuity of its local air quality management reporting by working towards producing an air quality progress report in 2026.

5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1 The 2026 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations is not considered a “strategic decision”, due to its technical basis and limited scope, albeit it’s publication and outcomes do relate to specific statutory duties held by the Local Authority. Neither is an Equality Impact Assessment believed necessary at this time as the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report does not stipulate any actions or a course of conduct that would have direct equality and diversity implications per se. Certain consequential actions associated with it, for instance the publication of environmental information, will likely require appropriate adjustment in the normal course of ensuing reasonable access and the ability for all to engage.
- 5.2 It is acknowledged that improvements to air quality may have direct socio-economic impact by making a location more economically desirable but perhaps more significant is the indirect benefit of potentially improving the health of those disadvantaged. Conversely, failure to work towards achieving compliance to relevant AQOs or to maintain effective cross-agenda working practices, could potentially slow desired sustainable development and the attainment of corporate goals and priorities.

6 WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The 2026 Air Quality Progress Report is primarily a technical report that is likely to be of limited general interest. As such the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report is not expected to have any negative implications as to the promotion of the Welsh Language. However, proactive translation of summary information which could have a wider audience will be undertaken, for instance a bilingual Executive Summary providing prominence to the Welsh Language.
- 6.2 The Local Authority will also continue to encourage and, where it can, support its partners in delivering air quality related services that provide prominence to the Welsh Language. This may help to further support the use of the Welsh Language in this specific setting.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 7.1 The 2026 Air Quality Progress Report recommends continuing the current level of provision with regards to local air quality monitoring and analysis in pursuit of the Local Authority's Air Quality Management Duty. This is estimated to have a revenue cost (but not staff and on-costs) of approximately £22,165.40 in 2025. Approximately £5,433.82 associated with air quality monitoring at Glyncoch is being recovered from the Operator of Craig Yr Hesg Quarry, pursuant to a S.106 planning consent agreement.
- 7.2 Recently, the Local Authority has been able to renew its automatic nitrogen dioxide monitor at Broadway, Treforest to continue to support understanding of local air quality, continuity of monitoring and broader data analysis and robustness. However, should future capital expenditure be required to replace failed equipment or if ongoing costs or resourcing scarcity impact other key services provided by the Department, then the Local Authority may determine to revise its current air quality monitoring and review provisions.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is under a legal obligation, in accordance with Section 82(1) of the Environment Act 1995 [the Act], to review local air quality within its area and make an assessment of likely compliance to the relevant statutory AQOs, as set in regulations.
- 8.2 To maintain consistency with statutory guidance and the principles and working practices necessary to facilitate the goals of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report has been compiled in accordance with the Welsh Government issued reporting template for local air quality management.
- 8.3 Under Section 85 of the Act, the Welsh Government may compel the Local Authority to act in a certain way in regard to local air quality. Statutory guidance has clarified that such a direction will be issued to instruct the Local Authority to undertake its local air quality management duties, including declaring, amending or revoking an AQMA should the Welsh Government feel it necessary to do so.
- 8.4 Local air quality management duties and AQOs are an obligation derived from United Kingdom primary legislation.

9 CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 To discharge its statutory responsibilities, the Local Authority will consult upon the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report, its findings and recommendations with the public and other statutory consultees as prescribed by Schedule 11 of the Environmental Act 1995; including the Welsh Government who will peer review the Report.

10 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT.

- 10.1 Both mortality and morbidity factors associated with poor air quality have increased in importance, as understanding of the health impact of air quality has improved. This includes a greater appreciation of the accumulative impacts poor air quality can have on deprived communities affected by higher rates of poor health.
- 10.2 The quality of air that we breathe is important to creating a healthier Wales and it is also inherently linked either directly or indirectly to a Prosperous Wales, as well as a number of other agendas which may influence Equality, Resilience and Global Responsibility. As a result, the quality of local air and its improvement, can have significant relevance to the Council's pursuit of Wales Seven Well-being Goals.
- 10.3 The importance of local Air Quality is reflected within the Council's 'Making a Difference Corporate Plan 2026 – 2030'. The well-being objective "Work and Business" references the priority of a "well connected County Borough" and in this pursuit recognises the need to support active and sustainable travel options, partly due to its positive impact upon local air quality. Within the "Nature and the Environment" well-being objective, the priority "protecting and enhancing the natural environment" makes specific reference to "improving air quality through traffic management" and other Council actions, with the associated outcome being "improved air quality across the County Borough".
- 10.4 Continued assessment and periodic review as well as sustaining a targeted approach to air quality improvement, recognises where improvements have been made and where further work may be necessary. This supports **long-term working**, as trends in local air quality may only be fully understood over years and where it can take a considerable period of time for some interventions to be fully appreciated. It also contributes to the **integrated working** of several wide-ranging but often interrelated agendas, including transport, active and sustainable travel, climate change and biodiversity. Correspondingly maintaining local air quality expertise and understanding can help to support **collaboration** between agendas and a 'win-win' approach to service delivery. For instance, measures to increase and support active and sustainable travel resulting in greater community connectivity, can directly improve air quality as well as being a sustainable driving force for local and regional employment and leisure opportunities.
- 10.5 Air quality and its impacts can be highly influenced by local circumstances which change over time, requiring its understanding to be frequently reappraised. Individuals, communities, developers, stakeholders and partner organisation often value reliable and robust information about air quality. By providing continuity to air quality assessment and undertaking statutory consultation upon it, it supports widescale **involvement** which facilitates valuable input to the understanding of local air quality, prior to final decision making. It also helps support more effective interventions that are more widely accepted and may aspire to efficiently **prevent** poorer air quality, that could otherwise be linked to future development.

- 10.6 Local air quality management statutory guidance incorporates the principles and ways of working associated within the Well-being of Future Generations Act. By fully abiding by this guidance and utilising a method that acknowledges and promotes sustainable multi-agenda delivery, the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report furthers the Local Authority delivery of the Future Generations agenda.
- 10.7 Local air quality management and its successful delivery is also recognised as a theme within the 'Clean Air Plan for Wales: Healthy Air, Healthy Wales', as issued by Welsh Government, and its pursuit of improved air quality throughout all parts of Wales.

11 STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS (please specify)

- 11.1 The 2026 Air Quality Progress Report is a technical report, as it examines and reports upon air quality, and the factors that may influence it, throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. However, for a variety of reasons, specific parts of the County Borough may be more at risk from elevated levels of air pollution and the associated impacts of air quality.
- 11.2 The following Electoral Divisions (ED) currently contain one or more AQMAs and are subject to, previously adopted, associated AQAPs:
- Cymmer ED (Cymmer AQMA)
 - Ferndale & Maerdy ED (Ferndale AQMA)
 - Mountain Ash ED (Mountain Ash Town Centre AQMA)
 - Pontypridd Town ED (Pontypridd Town Centre AQMA)
 - Trallwng ED & Treforest ED (Nightingales Bush AQMA)
 - Tylorstown and Ynyshir ED (Tylorstown AQMA)

12 CONCLUSION

- 12.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has produced the 2026 Air Quality Progress Report for public dissemination and comment.
- 12.2 To comply with statutory obligations and promote understanding of the situation, a comprehensive consultation will be undertaken. The responses received, including that from the Welsh Government, will inform any final decision and if necessary, this matter may be re-examined.
- 12.3 The Local Authority has identified that it is necessary, subject to the outcome of public consultation, to accept the assessment of local air quality and the review of actions, developments and policies, which may affect local air quality management.



LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

PUBLICATION OF THE 2026 AIR QUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers

2026 Air Quality Progress Report

Officer to contact

Neil Pilliner - Public Health & Protection Service Manager